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APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

Rural Radio-Call Services
(ETH/78/027)

Report of the Administrator*

Date of present approval:	November 1978
Starting date of project activities:	November 1978
Planned completion date:	August 1980
To be executed by:	International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
Government implementing agency:	Ethiopian Telecommunications Service, Ministry of Transport and Communications
Estimated cost of assistance planned under present approval:	$494 500
Source of UNDP financing:	Indicative Planning Figure (IPF)

I. Background

1. Ethiopia covers an area of 1.22 million square kilometres and has a population close to 30 million. Ninety per cent of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. The country has very rugged terrain and because of the great distances involved, development activities are hampered by poor communications, particularly within rural areas. This has been a particular problem when the Government has had to undertake massive relief and rehabilitation operations involving millions of people affected by recurrent droughts and recent wars. Improved telecommunications is considered by the Government as an essential input to the Government's development effort which aims at improving the living standards of the rural masses.

2. The Agency responsible for improving telecommunications is the Ethiopian Telecommunications Service, whose head office is located in Addis Ababa. It is a Government

*In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) and subsequent authorizations of the UNDP Governing Council, reports are issued seriatim on the approval of UNDP assistance of $250,000 or more (including, if any, assistance financed by Government or by third-party cost sharing).

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body with administrative and financial autonomy and the General Manager is responsible to a Board of Directors which determines policy matters. This Board is under the over-all control of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

II. Objectives and activities

3. The objectives of this project are to: (a) provide access to telecommunication services to 10 per cent of the rural community via 50 field stations, linked up with five base stations; (b) rationalize the utilization of the presently congested high frequency radio spectrum by establishing an integrated national radio-telephone service; and (c) provide practical experience in the development of rural telecommunication services using modern high-frequency radio techniques such as solid state equipment and solar cell technology.

4. Project activities will involve the installation of the equipment and the establishment of the radio system as well as the training of counterpart staff.

III. Inputs

5. UNDP is providing the Government the means to establish the basis of a rural radio network which will consist of five base stations, one in Addis Ababa and others in Asmara, Dessie, Harrar and Shashamene. In addition to four base stations, UNDP will also provide radio equipment with power supply for 40 field fixed stations and one maintenance centre for the base and field stations equipped with spare parts and maintenance equipment. To assist in the installation of this network, UNDP will provide for the services of one expert in rural radio-call communications for 12 months, and two fellowships for the staff of the Ethiopian Telecommunications Service to enable them to be trained in the planning, operation and maintenance of rural telecommunication services through visits to similar projects elsewhere.

6. A notable feature of the project is that the field stations will be powered by solar-charged batteries and the equipment will use solid state circuitry. The solar batteries obviate the need for generating units which require a constant resupply of fuel. The solid state circuitry is modular in nature, simplifying maintenance as any defective section can be removed and replaced without requiring skilled technicians.

7. The Government contribution to the project covers staff for setting up and operating the base stations and suitable sites and buildings for the equipment as well as all equipment, installation material, labour and transport, except for that specifically provided by UNDP.

IV. Financial data

8. The expenditure components of the planned assistance are as follows:

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Personnel	53 600
Training	8 400
Equipment	425 000
Miscellaneous	7 500
	494 500

9. The estimated total value, expressed in US dollars of inputs provided directly by the Government to the project is $527,000 in kind.